

THE MAN FROM HOME

A NOVELIZATION OF THE PLAY OF THE SAME NAME
BY BOOTH TARKINGTON AND HARRY L. WILSON



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CHAPTER VII.

SCENE I.

LARGESSE, sweet Countess of Hawcastle, the woman cried. "Largesse! And an revoir! Adieu! I leave you with your dear brother!"

She ran quickly up the steps with a flirt of her parasol, and Horace took his sister's hand with tears in his eyes. "Dear old sis! Dear old pal!" he said, and she turned a radiant look upon him.

"Isn't it glorious, Huddy?" she said with exalted tone. "Look!" and held up the book she carried. "It's Burke's 'Peagee.' And Froissart's 'Chronicles'—I've been reading it all over



"I had him, you know, I rather think, didn't I?"

again. The St. Aubyns were at Crecy and Agincourt, and St. Aubyn will be my name."

"They want it to be your name soon, sis," he answered her.

For a moment she turned away and then looked at him straight in the eyes.

"You're fond of Almerik, aren't you, Huddy? You admire him, don't you, dear?"

"Certainly. Why, think of all he represents, sis!"

"Ah, yes, Huddy! Crusader's blood flows in his veins. It is the nobility that must be within him that I have plighted my troth to. I am ready to marry him when they wish!"

Horace sighed.

"It will be as soon as the settlement is made and arranged. It will take about all your share of the estate, sis, but it's worth it—a hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

Ethel lifted the book to the level of her eyes.

"What better use could be made of a fortune, Huddy, than to maintain the state and high condition of so ancient a house?"

He looked at her affectionately and took her hand.

"It does seem impossible that we were born in Indiana, doesn't it, sister?" And the tones of his voice were those of incredulity.

She smiled at him fondly.

"But isn't it good that the pater made his pile as the Americans say, and let us come over here while we were young to find the nobler things, Huddy—the nobler things?"

"The nobler things—the nobler things! Why, sis, when old Hawcastle dies I'll be saying offhand, you know, 'My sister, the Countess of Hawcastle'!"

For a moment Ethel remained thoughtful and then turned to her brother.

"You don't imagine that father's friend, this old Mr. Pike, will be—will be queer, do you?"

"Well, the governor himself was rather raw, you know. This is probably a harmless old chap, easy to handle."

"I wish I knew. I shouldn't like Almerik's family to think we had queer connections of any sort, and he might turn out to be quite shockingly American. I—I couldn't bear that, Huddy!"

There was a note of genuine pathos in her voice, and her brother responded instantly.

"Then keep him out of the way. That's simple enough," he said. "None of them, except the solicitor, need see us."

Almost in a burst like an eruption there came an uproar outside the gates beyond the hotel—wild laughter, riotous cheering and the notes of the tarantella played by mandolins and guitar, then more shouts and cheers and cries of "Bravo, Americano!" and "Tanka Dooda!" Horace ran to the gates, but they were closed, and the uproar continued. Ethel stood by one of the tables, amusements written on her features, and turned to her brother

as he came back shaking his head.

"What is that?" she asked tremulously. Lady Creech, all in a flutter, entered from the hotel. At a glance one would set her down for an aristocrat. There was no doubt of it. From the topmost tip of her white hair to the toe of her solid shoe she was an aristocrat.

"One of your fellow countrymen, my dear," she said to Ethel. "Your Americans are really too!"

"Not my Americans, Lady Creech," said Ethel spiritedly.

"Not our, you know. One could hardly say that, now!" reiterated Horace.

Almerik entered, at once laughing and beating his foot with his crop. Almost exhausted with his mirth, he threw himself into a chair and burst out:

"Oh, I say, what a go! Motor car breaks down on the way here. One of the Johnnies, a German chap, discharges the chauffeur, and the other Johnny—one of your Yankee chaps, Ethel—hires two silly little donkeys, like rabbits, you know, to pull the machine. Then, as they can't make it, you know, he puts himself in the straps with them and proceeds, attended by the populace. Ha, ha!"

He laughed long and loudly.

"I went up to this Yankee chap, I mean to say—he was pulling and tugging along, you see—and I said, 'There you are, three of you in a row, aren't you?' meaning him and the two donkeys, you see. Ethel, and all he could answer was that he 'picked the best company in sight.' No meaning to it. I had him, you know, I rather think, didn't I?"

At this moment Lord Hawcastle entered with a bundle of newspapers under his arm and proceeded to settle himself at one of the tables. Almerik approached him.

"English papers, governor? I'll take the pink un. I'm off." And he picked up the tinted sheet as he spoke. Ethel came up to him and touched him on the arm.

"Going for a stroll, Almerik? Would you like me to go with you, dear?"

He looked at her vacantly for an instant and then stammered:

"Well, I rather thought I'd have a quiet bit of reading, you know."

Ethel drew back quickly and said in a very small voice:

"Oh, I beg your pardon."

Then she sat down hurriedly by Lord Hawcastle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AMERICAN.

THE clatter without continued unabated, and Ethel and the countess walked back to the terrace rampart to stand looking out over the glorious bay.

Horace, still in the seventh heaven of delighted realization, took the Daily Mail from the table on which the earl had thrown it and seated himself to read beside Lady Creech, who was already deep in the Church Register.

The earl had buried himself in the Pall Mall Gazette and was apparently oblivious to such minor details as an Italian peasant row.

But to Horace in his highly strung condition of nerves the uproar was aggravating, and he called to Mariano, who was busily setting the table again:

"Mariano, how long is this noise to continue?"

The maitre d'hotel shrugged his expressive shoulders and replied:

"How can I know, m'sieu? We can do nothing."

Michele, who was assisting his chief, smiled covertly at the young man.

"The populace they will not be de-part so long as there shall be the chance once again to observe the North American who pulled the automobile with the donkeys?"

"Merci!" cried Mariano, with vigor. "He have confuse me. He have confuse everybody. He will not be content with the dejeuner until he have the ham and the egg, and he will have the egg cooked upon but one of two sides, and how in the name of the heaven can we tell which of these two sides?"

Mariano was about to continue his grumbling complaint when from the doorway of the hotel there came an interruption. The courier who had spoken with him earlier in the morning stood there and voiced but one word.

"Garcon!" he said softly. But it was like the command of a cavalry officer in its effect, for instantly the maitre d'hotel and his aid stood at attention like trained veterans. The earl evidently was not too deeply immersed to catch the sudden silence, for he looked up from his paper and observed:

"Upon my soul! Who's this?"

Mariano did not turn his head nor relax his attitude of stiff attention, but answered obsequiously:

"It is the Herr von Grollerhagen, a German gentleman, m'lord."

Hawcastle turned with an amused smile to Horace.

"The man who owns the automobile. Probably made a fortune in sausage."

From within the hotel there came the tones of a heavy though cultivated voice declaiming quietly:

"Neln, neln, Riblere! 'S macht nichts!"

And instantly there came down the steps the German gentleman aforesaid. He was tall and of a commanding presence. He wore a grayish beard and an automobile cap that half concealed the eyes that burned with the authority of generations beneath.

Withal it was a kindly face, and, though there was a stern command in the figure, there was genial humor and even tenderness too. By no authority could he have been considered well dressed. His clothes seemed rather to have been thrown on negligently.

The little party at the table regarded him with hostility, and Lady Creech turned up her aristocratic nose.

"What a dreadful person!" she said and turned again to her paper.

The German walked sedately across the terrace to the table where the two servants still stood at attention and lifted his hand in a curt half military salute in acknowledgment of their bow.

"See to my American friend," he said.

"Can I persuade you to try one of my national dishes," he asked—"caviare?"

removing his dust coat, sat down opposite the German.

"You are a true patriot," laughed Von Grollerhagen. "You allow no profane hand to cook your national dish. I trust you will be as successful with that wicked motor of mine."

Pike laughed heartily.

"Lord bless your soul, doc, I've put a self binder together after a pony engine had bucked it halfway through a brick depot," said Pike genially, tucking his napkin inside the collar of his shirt and falling to on the ham and eggs. At the table where sat the Hawcastle party there were expressions of pained agony.

"You have studied mechanics at the university, then?" went on Von Grollerhagen. "Is it not so?"

"University?" returned Pike. "Not much! On the old man's farm."

Hawcastle turned at once to Horace.

"Without any disrespect to you, my dear fellow, what terrible boundaries most of your fellow countrymen are!"

Horace mentally writhed under the veiled taunt, but turned quickly with an assent in effect.

"Do you wonder that sis and I have emancipated ourselves?" he asked, and the noble earl, with a softened glance as he thought of the dollars, replied blandly. "Not at all, my dear boy."

and turned once more to his paper.

Von Grollerhagen glanced at the three with slight amusement and held out the caviare to Pike.

"Can I persuade you to try one of my national dishes," he asked—"caviare?"

"Your countryman does seem to be rather down on us?"

Horace flushed with mortification and returned:

"This fellow is distinctly of the lower orders. We should cut him as completely in the States as here."

CHAPTER IX.

RECOGNIZED.

THE German was frankly enjoying his guest's conversation and quaint mannerisms and went on:

"I wonder you make this long journey, my friend, instead of spending your holiday at home."

Pike looked up in astonishment.

"Holiday? Why, I never even had time to go to Niagara falls. I'm here on business."

Ethel, who was still standing by the countess, looked at her friend with pained entreaty, and Horace, catching Lady Creech's basilisk eye fixed on him, reddened with mortification.

Daniel carefully folded his napkin and sat back.

"I expect it's about time for me to go and find the two young folks I've come to look after," he said.

"You are here for a duty, then?" asked the German quietly.

"I shouldn't be surprised if that was the name for it," answered Pike, rising. "Yes, sir; all the way from Indiana!"

Both Ethel and Horace started in horrified amazement and looked at each other with stricken terror on their faces. If this should—

"I—I can't stand this. I shall go for a stroll," said Horace hysterically and rose from the table, while Hawcastle looked at Pike fixedly.

"By Jove!" he said slowly.

"I expect, doc," went on Pike calmly, "that I won't be able to eat with you this evening. You see—you see I've come a mighty long way to look after

said.

"What a terrible person!" remarked Lady Creech again, and Hawcastle bent toward her.

"Undoubtedly, but he speaks English. So be careful."

"So many objectionable people do," commented the crusty dame.

Herr von Grollerhagen turned smilingly to Mariano.

"My American friend desires his national dish."

Mariano bowed.

"Yes, Herr von Grollerhagen," replied Mariano deferentially. "He will have the eggs on but one of two sides and the ham fried, so he go to cook it himself."

Von Grollerhagen smiled, when from without the gates came a shout of amusement and wild laughter. Mariano instantly bowed and ran toward the hotel.

"Ha!" he said eagerly. "He return from the kitchen with that national dish."

Michele emerged from the hotel walking backward and carrying a covered dish, while Ethel turned with a little shudder of disgust to the countess.

"How horrible!" she said, and the Frenchwoman patted her shoulder reassuringly.

Immediately following the servant came Pike, the same self possessed Pike, clad in a linen duster and a straw hat that was decorated with a bright ribbon. If there was anything distinctive about him it was his scarf, which was of that type known as Windsor and much affected by artists in the east and every one in the west. He carried a towel with him and dropped it in one hand as he glanced about.

"Law!" he observed, startled, but amused. "I didn't know there were folks here. Reckon you'll have to excuse me. Here, son!" he called, tossing the towel to the table. Hawcastle, Lady Creech and Horace stared unbelieveably. Ethel hid her face, with another little shudder, as Pike, without

removing his dust coat, sat down opposite the German.

"You are a true patriot," laughed Von Grollerhagen. "You allow no profane hand to cook your national dish. I trust you will be as successful with that wicked motor of mine."

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Don't take the same in the city?"

"Then you do not like your city?"

"Like it? Why, sir, for public buildings and architecture I wouldn't trade our state insane asylum for the worst ruined ruin in Europe—not for hygiene and real comfort."

"And your people?"

"The best on earth. Why, out my way folks are neighbors!"

Horace rattled his paper sharply and glanced angrily at the disturber of his harmony. The German went on.

"But you have no leisure class," he objected, and Daniel smiled.